GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2175
ANSWERED ON:06.05.2016
Veracity of Breaking News
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Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether any mechanism has been put in place to check on the veracity of breaking news broadcasted by electronic media;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any complaints have been received/suo motu cognizance taken by the government in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof along with the measures taken by the Government in the matter; and

(e) the other steps taken/being taken by the Government to check such practices and to safeguard the interest of the affected and to reprimand the broadcast?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING [COL RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (Retd.)]

(a) to (e). Telecast of content on private satellite TV channels is regulated as per Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 framed thereunder. The Act does not provide for pre-censorship of programmes and advertisements telecast on TV channels. However, it prescribes that all programmes and advertisements telecast on TV channels should be in conformity with the prescribed Programme Code and Advertising Code enshrined in the aforesaid Act and the rules framed thereunder. The said codes contain a whole range of parameters to regulate programmes and advertisements on TV such channels including News and its veracity. Specifically Rule 6(d) of the Programme Code provides that no programme should be carried in the cable service which contains anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half-truths.

The Government has set up Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC) to monitor the content of private TV channels with reference to violation of Programme and Advertising Codes. An Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) has also been set up in the Ministry to look into the specific complaints or suo-motu take cognizance against the violation of Programme and Advertising Codes. Action is taken whenever any violation is brought to notice, action is taken by the government. A list showing details of action taken against TV channels for violation of Programme and Advertisement Rule 6(1)(d) is annexed at Annexure.

As part of self-regulation, News Broadcasters Association (NBA) - a representative body of news and current affairs channels-has set up News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA) to consider complaints against or in respect of broadcasters in so far as these relate to the content of any News and currents affairs broadcast.

The Regulations and Guidelines formulated by NBA/NBSA contain certain provisions relating to objectivity, impartiality, neutrality, privacy, accuracy, fairness, good taste and decency etc. which have a bearing on all broadcasters including "breaking news". Any violations of the Codes/Guidelines/ Advisories by members of NBA are dealt with the NBSA.

The existing provisions contained in the said Codes and existing mechanism are considered adequate to regulate the content telecast on private TV channels.

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